

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (currently amended) A method of preparing vanillin which comprises:

(i) ~~a step of~~ carrying out a biotransformation process in a presence of a microorganism consisting of *Amycolatopsis sp.* IMI 390106 or mutants thereof which are resistant to spectinomycin, to generate a biotransformation medium which contains vanillin produced by said biotransformation process ~~and substantially free from odoriferous by-products~~ and substantially free from odoriferous by-products;

(ii) ~~a step of~~ precipitating a crude vanillin product from a solution which is or is derived from said biotransformation medium; and

(iii) purifying said vanillin product by a process comprising contacting the vanillin product with a purification fluid selected from (a) a liquefied gas whose pressure exceeds its critical pressure and whose temperature is below its critical temperature; (b) a supercritical fluid; (c) a gas; to provide solid vanillin ~~which has higher purity than said vanillin product of step (ii).~~

2. (original) A method according to claim 1 wherein said purification fluid is a liquefied gas.

3. (previously presented) A method according to claim 1 wherein said purification fluid is at a temperature below 25°.

4. (original) A method according to claim 1 wherein said purification fluid is (a) a liquefied gas or (b) a supercritical fluid.

5. (previously presented) A method according to claim 1 wherein said fluid is carbon dioxide.

6. (currently amended) A method according to claim 1 including a further step (iv) of treating said vanillin of step (iii) with a gas in a ~~fluidised~~ fluidized bed.

7. (previously presented) A method according to claim 1 in which the supercritical fluid and/or the gas is carbon dioxide.

8. (previously presented) A method according to claim 1 in which said biotransformation process comprises the biotransformation of ferulic acid into vanillin.

9. (original) A method according to claim 8 in which the ferulic acid is derived from a natural plant source.

10. (previously presented) A method according to claim 1 in which the biotransformation medium is a culture medium.

11-14. (canceled)

15. (currently amended) A method according to claim [[11]] 1, wherein said ~~microorganisms consist in~~ *Amycolatopsis* sp. ~~deposited with the Culture Collection CABI under an accession number~~ IMI_390106 or mutants thereof which are ~~(a) resistant to spectinomycin and (b)~~ capable of producing vanillin substantially free from guaiacol.

16. (currently amended) A method according to claim [[15]] 1, wherein said ~~microorganisms~~ *Amycolatopsis* sp. IMI 390106 or mutants thereof are capable of producing a vanillin material containing not more than 100ppm of guaiacol.

17-21. (canceled)

22. (new) A method according to claim 1 wherein said solid vanillin obtained at step (iii) has a vanillin content of 98% to 100%.